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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0330
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI 0050
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0603

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 002388

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/04/2018

TAGS: [GG](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL FOCUSES ON TRANS-ATLANTIC AGENDA AT
GYMNICH (EU FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING)

REF: SECSTATE 93272

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Portugal is expected to remain in the background on most of the Gymnich discussions this week including Russia and Georgia, the Middle East, and EU Security Strategy, but will take the lead on the Trans-Atlantic presentation. Portuguese FM Amado will prompt the EU ministers to coordinate a position on global cooperation issues so that the bloc will be able to present their ideas to the incoming U.S. administration. Although Amado had hoped to include Canada in the discussions, other EU partners preferred to focus on the U.S.-EU relationship. End summary.

¶2. (C) Russia and Georgia: Portugal believes that the September 1 EU statement on Russia and Georgia struck a fair middle ground and left both Russia and Georgia satisfied with the EU's stance, according to Deputy EU Correspondent Ana Filomena Rocha. Although Rocha admitted that Russia had "responded badly" in Georgia, she stated flatly that sanctions would hurt the EU more than they hurt Russia. Moreover, Portugal remains unconvinced that the ESDP proposal would be useful at this point, according to Rocha. She said the GOP would withhold judgment until the French Presidency circulated an ESDP proposal, but that the initial idea, which included positioning throughout Georgia, would not be helpful and could provoke Russia. Regarding assistance to Georgia, Rocha predicted that the EU would send two packages to respond to humanitarian and reconstruction needs but she stated that Portugal would not contribute bilaterally.

¶3. (C) Middle East Peace Process: The French Presidency had planned to showcase the Middle East, but it has lost momentum after the crisis in Georgia, Rocha stated. The discussion will probably focus on the Turkish Prime Minister's readout on the Israel/Syria track.

¶4. (C) EU Security Strategy: Rocha speculated that the foreign ministers would briefly discuss Solana's five-year analysis but predicted that the group would only propose a new framework in November during the joint foreign ministers-defense ministers meeting.

¶5. (C) Trans-Atlantic Relationship: Portuguese FM Amado initially hoped to review the European Union's relationship with both the United States and Canada at this session but had faced pressure from the Czech Republic to focus only on the United States, according to Rocha. Amado plans to raise a laundry list of cooperation items including future ESDP missions, non-proliferation, trade, human rights (particularly Guantanamo), food, energy, and climate change. Rocha reiterated that Amado's main objective is that the ministers establish a coordinated, well-considered plan for

engagement with the incoming U.S. administration. Rocha mentioned that the Afghanistan/Pakistan discussion would cover strategies to bolster international coordination and was considered part of the trans-Atlantic discussion.

16. (SBU) Violence Against Christians: The Italian government has requested a discussion about the increasing violence against Christians in India. Portugal is awaiting further details on the Italian proposal at the meeting on Friday.
STEPHENSON